

THE RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT AND THE END OF "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL"

(Mr. PRICE of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, the end this week of Don't Ask, Don't Tell shows us that we have nothing to fear and can only gain by extending liberty and equality to all of our citizens. Brave young men and women will not be denied the opportunity to serve their country, and soldiers will be judged on their ability to do their jobs, not on their sexual orientation.

This is a great step forward, but some seem eager to step back. In North Carolina, there is a ballot initiative to amend the State constitution to ban same-sex marriage. This seems to be more about turning out the Republican political base than about marriage, and many of our businesses say it would hinder their attempts to treat employees fairly. We must defeat it.

At the national level, we also have an anachronistic law, the so-called Defense of Marriage Act. This should be repealed. Repeal would ensure that marriages entered into in one State will be recognized by other States. This year, I have again cosponsored repeal and don't intend to rest until DOMA is erased from the U.S. Code.

Madam Speaker, history will judge these efforts at discrimination harshly. It is time for America's political leaders, including Members of this body, to catch up.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

(Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Madam Speaker, if our Nation's debt crisis has taught us anything, it's that we need a permanent fiscal solution to keep America the permanent land of the free for our children and grandchildren.

There is only one way to bind Congress to such a commitment, and that is a constitutional amendment requiring us to balance the budget. Ordinary spending cuts and pledges to slash the deficit are no longer sufficient.

Washington went on a record-breaking spending binge and left Americans in an economic hangover. New taxes, as some propose, would only punish the victim and reward the spenders with more money to waste. We need to stop spending money we don't have and begin living within our means. The future of our Nation depends on it.

A Washington promise is always temporary. A constitutional amendment is permanent. For the sake of tomorrow's generations, let's get it done today.

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WE LOVE OUR CARRIE MEEK

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary woman, a dedicated public servant, and a dear friend: Congresswoman Carrie Meek. Carrie has lived a life of distinction, and her legacy is extensive and incredible.

The granddaughter of a slave, Carrie became the first African American woman to serve in the Florida Senate. My husband, Dexter Lehtinen, and I had the honor of serving with Carrie in the Florida House and then in the Florida Senate, and then Carrie went on to become the first African American from Florida since Reconstruction elected to Congress. What an honor.

While in Congress, Carrie worked vigorously and resolutely for her constituents in all of south Florida, playing an instrumental role in rebuilding our community after the devastation of Hurricane Andrew.

Her accomplishments and service to our south Florida community are too many to be enumerated; however, she hasn't rested on her laurels. Since leaving this Chamber, she continues her commitment to service through The Carrie Meek Foundation.

I ask my colleagues to join us today in paying tribute to our dear friend, Congresswoman Carrie Meek.

JOBS

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, we each talk in this Chamber about jobs. The good news is legislation that will create jobs has already been introduced. Now we have to pass it.

The American Jobs Act includes \$50 billion to repair our aging infrastructure. It would create 3,100 jobs in western New York, alone, rebuilding our roads and bridges, which will encourage private development and even further job creation. Economists have concluded that this bill will create 2 million jobs and keep the U.S. from sliding back into recession.

Also, Madam Speaker, according to the Alliance for American Manufacturing, 2.8 million jobs have been lost over the last decade as a result of our trade deficit with China, including 22,000 jobs in western New York, alone. American workers can compete with anyone so long as there is a level playing field, but China is fixing the game through currency manipulation. The Currency Reform for Fair Trade Act would put a stop to that.

The time is long past due for this Congress to pass legislation that will create jobs. I urge the House to take up the American Jobs Act and the Currency Reform for Fair Trade Act immediately.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL

(Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, it is with tremendous pride that I rise today to reaffirm my deep and unwavering commitment to the State of Israel, our greatest friend and closest ally in the Middle East.

This is a country that has celebrated our triumphs and mourned our tragedies, a country that has shared our principles of peace, freedom, and democracy, and, most of all, a country that has, without fail, defended America in her darkest hour.

As the U.N. considers recognizing an independent Palestinian state, it is more important now than ever that we stand up, speak out, and oppose this blatant attempt to circumvent direct talks with Israel. I've joined with many other colleagues in a letter to President Obama urging the U.N. to veto any resolution that grants the Palestinian statehood without direct negotiation with Israel.

Peace cannot be created or sustained through a single unilateral decision from the U.N. I will continue to urge the U.N. to veto, and I will stand with tremendous pride and admiration beside our friends in Israel.

TRAIN ACT—REPUBLICANS' SO-CALLED JOBS BILL

(Ms. CHU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHU. Some in Congress want to use the jobs crisis as an excuse to roll back clean air protections that have prevented 200,000 premature deaths.

Today we are debating the TRAIN Act. This is the Republicans' so-called jobs bill, conducting studies that will do nothing but add paper to landfills instead of creating jobs by upgrading toxic power plants so that they are no longer a threat to public health.

The studies have been done. Americans are still breathing mercury, arsenic, and chromium, and we have a means to clean it up. It's called the Clean Air Act, and it was passed in 1963.

No matter what anyone says, increased pollution is not a sustainable path to job creation. Instead, we should be saving lives, saving our environment, and investing in the clean tech jobs of the future.

The TRAIN Act is a train wreck for Americans.

JOBS

(Mr. MEEHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEHAN. Madam Speaker, few come to this Congress with more interest in protecting air and water than myself, as I did as a prosecutor who actually used the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act for the good of the country. We must find balance.